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Review

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by Rüdiger Schnell

Review by: Victor M. Schmidt

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problematic. Negative evidence for the early Middle Ages may not mean much, as others have pointed out regarding the absence of a word for purgatory. Had Schmitt known the prosopography of sainthood by Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell he might not have said that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries "few mystic women officially became saints." That particular statement, finally, leads me to observe that Schmitt's major conclusions tend to confirm the obvious, or at least to confirm what he seeks: the early Middle Ages were ascetic; the twelfth century rediscovered the body; the clergy sought to guard its preeminence over the laity; men scorned the behavior of women. Most often (although I think not in every context) he is right; nevertheless, he does not enlighten those generalities with original explanation or much sense of nuance. In short, this is a good book on the body and its uses, but readers familiar with the considerable recent literature in this field will know of several better.

ROBERT E. LERNER, Northwestern University

RÜDIGER SCHNELL, ed., *Liber Alexandri Magni: Die Alexandergeschichte der Handschrift Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, n.a.l. 310*. (Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 96.) Munich: Artemis, 1989. Pp. x, 236; color frontispiece, illustrations. DM 58.

During the Middle Ages the late-antique Greek Alexander romance known to scholarship as Pseudo-Callisthenes enjoyed considerable success as an important source of information about the great world conqueror. The α redaction was translated into Latin in the fourth century by Julius Valerius. It was, however, in its epitomized form (ninth century?) that the work was mostly read. The lost δ redaction was also translated into Latin, probably between 951 and 959, by the archpriest Leo of Naples. The δ redaction has always received most of the scholarly attention, and the main stages of its transmission are now well known. Leo's original survives only as a reworked text, in London, Lambeth Palace, MS 342, and Bamberg, Staatliche Bibliothek, MS Hist. 3. The Bamberg manuscript formed the basis of the so-called Bavarian recension, which is represented by Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 23489, written in the third quarter of the twelfth century (not "ca.1200") in the monastery of Schäftlarn, and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS n.a.l. 310, written in the second half of the twelfth century in the monastery of Tegernsee. Probably independently of the London and Bamberg manuscripts, Leo's text was expanded into the first interpolated version of the so-called *Historia de preliis* I¹, which in its turn was reworked into the second and third interpolated versions. All these versions were important in that they were translated into Hebrew and various vernaculars. Gradually scholars realized that even manuscripts belonging to the same recension or version may vary greatly as to wording and their assessment of events in Alexander's life. Clearly Leo's original was considered as a fascinating, but rather neutral, sequence of events that could be easily expanded and interpolated. One such text, that of the Paris manuscript, has now been published for the first time.

The edition of this text is justified in that a lost, but closely related, manuscript must have been the model for Johann Hartlieb's *Histori von dem Grossen Alexander*, written in the early 1450s. Secondly, the text is interesting in that it gives insight into the transmission of Alexander texts in general. In order to prove this the author had to study, not only the Alexander text as such, but also the manuscript as a whole. It is this study that makes Schnell's book particularly interesting.

After a short general introduction the author gives a careful description of the

manuscript and its contents. The Alexander text comes after an abridgment of Paulus Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*; Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana*; and Rufus Festus, *Breviarium* and is followed by Einhard's and Notker the Stammerer's lives of Charlemagne; the *Letter of Prester John* in the "Bavarian recension" of the second redaction (B); Robert the Monk, *History of Jerusalem*; and the *Letter of the Patriarch of Jerusalem* (1098). As the author in the third, and longest, chapter sets out to prove, the principle underlying this arrangement is the history of salvation from the Fall of man to the conquest of the Holy Land. In this context it is striking that the prefaces of most works were left out. And what is more, a study of the individual texts shows that the whole manuscript is the result of careful editing.

The Orosius epitome seems to be unique in its sequence of factual material without Orosius's own opinions. The Paulus Diaconus text was interpolated with parts from Orosius after it was copied but in such a way that there is no overlap with the Orosius epitome. Festus's text seems to have been included because it supplements Paulus Diaconus so well. A tendency to completeness as to facts can be detected also in the Alexander text. The basis is Leo, with the Valerius epitome as the second source, supplemented by Alexander material from various other sources. This inclusion of material from secondary sources can be seen in other versions that go back to Leo as well. Also the transmission of Alexander texts in the context of historiographic texts can be paralleled in other manuscripts. As Schnell rightly remarks, the last aspect suggests that the distinction between historiography and romance was a gradual one. In a detailed analysis he shows that the Alexander text was assimilated to historiography by the use of Orosius as an authority, including the interpolations added after the text was copied. Finally, a comparable tendency to completeness and integration can be seen in the two lives of Charlemagne, which as they stand seem to be unique. The last three items of the manuscript show no remarkable textual idiosyncrasies.

The fourth chapter examines whether the textual unity of the manuscript is reflected in the manuscript qua manuscript. The case is not straightforward because the manuscript was copied in three parts: Orosius; Paulus Diaconus, Festus, and the Alexander; and the rest. Although various hands can be distinguished, the script makes a homogeneous impression. Paleographical features suggest that at least parts were copied directly from an exemplar, after which new editorial work was done. The author is probably right in arguing that all this does not preclude a program established beforehand, but the exact genesis of the manuscript remains to be discovered. The assumption that its realization took five to ten years is not substantiated and seems to be at odds with the suggestion that the manuscript was intended for the monastery's library.

The fifth chapter provides a detailed discussion of the sources of the Alexander text in conjunction with a justification of the critical apparatus in the text edition. The sixth works out the composition methods of the Alexander text and the selection of sources already mentioned in detail in chapter 3. The seventh chapter is a note on the title of the Alexander text given in the manuscript. Chapter 8 discusses the relation between the Alexander text and Hartlieb's Alexander book. That both were related was already known, but the author has now been able to show that Hartlieb used a copy of the Paris manuscript, not the Paris manuscript itself and not a common prototype. The final chapter provides a synopsis of the text with the sources used.

Being no philologist, I must leave the quality of the text edition for others to judge. Suffice it here to say that the editorial principles are extensively explained. I should note that in addition to the critical apparatus there is a paleographical apparatus, indicating such things as erasures and the placement of letters on or above the lines.

To sum up, this book establishes its aims in excellent fashion. Although questions

about the purpose and function of historiographic compilations such as the Paris manuscript have been, perhaps necessarily, dealt with summarily, the book is a good starting point for such a study. The edition of the source of Hartlieb's Alexander book makes it possible now to study his translation technique (a full edition of Hartlieb's *Histori* has meanwhile appeared in the same series). Finally, the author has made an important contribution to the study of the medieval Latin Alexander texts. Professor Schnell has shown in exemplary fashion what a combination of a philological and codicological approach can achieve.

VICTOR M. SCHMIDT, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

SHULAMITH SHAHAR, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990. Pp. xi, 342. \$29.95.

Shulamith Shahar advances the thesis that medieval people were fully cognizant that childhood differed from adulthood, furthermore that parents invested "both material and emotional resources in their offspring" (p. 1). She sees childhood as divided into stages in medieval times and uses the categories of infancy, early childhood to age seven, and a second stage of childhood to thirteen or fourteen as the framework for her study. The author's work is arranged topically after this framework is presented, proceeding from childbirth to nursing to first-stage childhood. She then deviates from the stages to examine abandonment, infanticide, and accidents in one chapter, sickness, handicaps, bereavements, and orphanhood in another. The remainder of the book looks at education in the second stage of childhood, that is, after age seven, and class considerations in educating children for the church, noble lives, urban lives, or a peasant existence. The book avoids a conclusion, ending with an appendix on the possible presence of oedipal behavior or other Freudian psychological phenomena in the Middle Ages. The author claims here that "no attempt has been made in this book to describe medieval childhood according to the Freudian pattern of development or any other psychological theory" (p. 254).

This last-mentioned assertion may be challenged, however. In chapter 4, on nursing, Shahar speculates at some length on whether the maternal instinct is universal. She asserts that "Motherliness is not a fixed and imprinted pattern of conduct which is automatically manifested in the same form irrespective of circumstances. It is a system of skills and emotions based on the maternal instinct . . ." (p. 74). She goes on to mention Elisabeth Badinter on instincts, without specific citation, and states her own theory that instincts vary in intensity and according to the norms of the time and place. Here and elsewhere the work does employ and elaborate upon psychological theory, perhaps necessarily so since the concept of childhood itself is a psychological one.

The author's purpose in addressing the topic is to set the record straight on medieval understandings of childhood, which she believes Philippe Ariès in *Centuries of Childhood* (New York, 1972, for English edition) and his followers interpreted wrongly. The book returns time and again to Ariès's characterization of the mode of childrearing in the Middle Ages as remote with little, if any, recognition of the special needs of children. Shahar argues that it is difficult to generalize about the age in this regard because theories of that day presented children as both innocents and as creatures subject wholly to their drives. She attempts to right the record by revealing the diversity of understandings of children within the topos of a clear conception of childhood itself. Her evidence ranges from canon law and Bracton on common law to literary sources. She consults secondary material and favors an anecdotal approach